



**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO**  
Great Government Through the General Management System – Quality, Timeliness, Value  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

**CLASS SPECIFICATION**

**CLASSIFIED**

**FORENSIC DOCUMENTS EXAMINER**  
**SENIOR FORENSIC DOCUMENTS EXAMINER**

**Class No. 005721**  
**Class No. 005718**

**■ CLASSIFICATION PURPOSE**

Under general direction identifies, authenticates, and examines questioned documents; provides demonstrative expert testimony in court; and performs related work.

**■ DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS**

These classes are found only in the Sheriff's Department and the Office of the District Attorney. Forensic Documents Examiner classes are non-sworn forensic scientists specializing in the examination of documentary evidence using instrumental, chemical, and other laboratory methods to determine age, source, content, authenticity and other related information. This class series is distinguished from the Criminalist classes in that the latter are forensic laboratory scientists performing a wide variety of chemical/biological tests in the areas of serology, narcotics, trace evidence/toxicology, DNA and blood alcohol analyses.

Forensic Documents Examiner:

This is the journey-level class of the series. Incumbents perform complex work, and are forensic professionals specializing in questioned document examination and providing testimony in court.

Senior Forensic Documents Examiner:

This is the lead-level class of the series. Incumbents perform the most difficult work; provide technical guidance and training to subordinate staff; coordinate overall laboratory functions of the Document Unit; and are responsible for reviewing case analyses.

**■ FUNCTIONS**

The examples of functions listed in the class specifications are representative but not necessarily exhaustive or descriptive of any one position in the classes. Management is not precluded from assigning other related functions not listed herein if such duties are a logical assignment for the position.

Forensic Documents Examiner

Essential Functions:

1. Conducts comparative examinations of questioned and specimen handwriting, handprinting, and typewriting.
2. Restores and deciphers indented, erased, altered and obliterated entries to include burned and charred documents.
3. Identifies and/or differentiates inks, papers, adhesives, paper/cellulose tape and identifies counterfeit documents.
4. Conducts these and other examinations to resolve questions concerning the age, source, content or authenticity of documents using microscopes, optical aids and other instruments.
5. Applies various photographic techniques, ultraviolet and infrared radiation and thin-layer chromatography to conduct examination of documents.
6. Incorporates results of examinations into written reports for use by investigative agencies, judicial bodies or other agencies submitting evidence.
7. Provides demonstrative expert testimony as required.
8. Provides responsive, high quality service to County employees, representatives of outside agencies and members of the public by providing accurate, complete and up-to-date information, in a courteous, efficient and timely manner.

### Senior Forensic Documents Examiner

#### Essential Functions:

All the functions listed above and

1. Monitors workflow to ensure timeliness of completion.
2. Conducts technical review of reports to ensure thoroughness and accuracy of results.
3. Ensures compliance of section personnel with safety, quality assurance, quality control protocols and other laboratory regulations.
4. Provides technical guidance and training to non-laboratory personnel regarding the collection, preservation and submission of documentary evidence and laboratory capabilities.

### ■ KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

#### Knowledge of:

- Forensic document examination.
- Forensic science techniques and procedures.
- Criminal court actions.
- Rules of evidence.
- Laboratory safety practices.
- Reference sources in forensic document examination.
- Latest technological advances in forensic document examination.
- Physical and chemical properties of papers and inks.
- Photography techniques used in forensic documents examination.
- Types of mechanically produced documents and their preparation.
- County customer service objectives and strategies.

#### Senior Forensic Documents Examiner (in addition to the above):

- Training principles and methods.

#### Skills and Abilities to:

- Analyze handwriting and handprinting.
- Analyze mechanical impressions.
- Analyze papers and inks.
- Explain technical document examination findings to law enforcement officers and attorneys.
- Interpret altered and indented documents.
- Testify in court as an expert witness.
- Train others in forensic test result interpretation and evidence preservation.
- Prepare reports, evidence, and exhibits for presentation in court.
- Establish and maintain cooperative relations with various law enforcement agency personnel.
- Communicate effectively orally and in writing.
- Establish effective working relationships with management, employees, employee representatives and the public representing diverse cultures and backgrounds.
- Treat County employees, representatives of outside agencies and members of the public with courtesy and respect.
- Assess the customer's immediate needs and ensure customer's receipt of needed services through personal service or referral.
- Exercise appropriate judgment in answering questions and releasing information.
- Analyze and project consequences of decisions and/or recommendations.

### ■ EDUCATION/EXPERIENCE

Education, training, and/or experience that demonstrate possession of the knowledge, skills and abilities listed above. Examples of qualifying education/experience are:

#### Forensic Documents Examiner:

1. A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with at least two (2) college-level courses in the natural, physical, computer science or other closely related fields AND either:
  - a. Eighteen (18) months of training in document examination in a law enforcement or criminal justice agency, OR
  - b. Eighteen (18) months of full time independent document work in a law enforcement or criminal justice agency, OR

2. Certification by the American Board of Forensic Document Examiners, Inc., OR
3. Full membership in the American Society of Questioned Document Examiners, Inc.

Senior Forensic Documents Examiner:

1. Two (2) years of experience as a Forensic Document Examiner in the County of San Diego, OR
2. A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in a physical, biological or forensic science, AND five (5) years of full-time independent document work experience performing in a law enforcement or criminal justice agency, AND
  - a. Certification by the American Board of Forensic Document Examiners, Inc., OR
  - b. Full membership in the American Society of Questioned Document Examiners, Inc.

■ **ESSENTIAL PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS**

The physical characteristics described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of the classifications. Reasonable accommodation may be made to enable an individual with qualified disabilities to perform the essential functions of a job, on a case-by-case basis.

Continuous upward and downward flexion of the neck. Frequent: sitting, repetitive use of hands to operate computers, printers and copiers. Occasional: walking, standing, bending and twisting of neck, bending and twisting of waist, squatting, simple grasping, reaching above and below shoulder level, and lifting and carrying of files weighing up to 10 pounds.

■ **SPECIAL NOTES, LICENSES, OR REQUIREMENTS**

License

A valid California class C driver's license, which must be maintained throughout employment in this class, is required at time of appointment, or the ability to arrange necessary and timely transportation for field travel. Employees in this class may be required to use their own vehicle.

Certification/Registration

Certification by the American Board of Forensic Document Examiners, Inc. and full membership in the American Society of Questioned Document Examiners, Inc. are highly desirable.

Working Conditions

Office environment; exposure to computer screens.

Background Investigation

Must have a reputation for honesty and trustworthiness. Felony convictions will be disqualifying. Misdemeanor convictions may be disqualifying depending on type, number, severity, and recency. Prior to appointment, candidates will be subject to a thorough background investigation which may include a psychological, polygraph or other examination or test.

Probationary Period

Forensic Documents Examiner: Incumbents appointed to permanent positions in this class shall serve a probationary period of 6 months (Civil Service Rule 4.2.5).

Senior Forensic Documents Examiner: Incumbents appointed to permanent positions in this class shall serve a probationary period of 12 months (Civil Service Rule 4.2.5).

**New: April 23, 1999**  
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**Reviewed: Spring 2003**  
**Revised: January 11, 2005**

Forensic Documents Examiner (Class No. 005721)  
 Senior Forensic Documents Examiner (Class No. 005718)

Union Code: PR  
 Union Code: CEM

Variable Entry: Y  
 Variable Entry: Y